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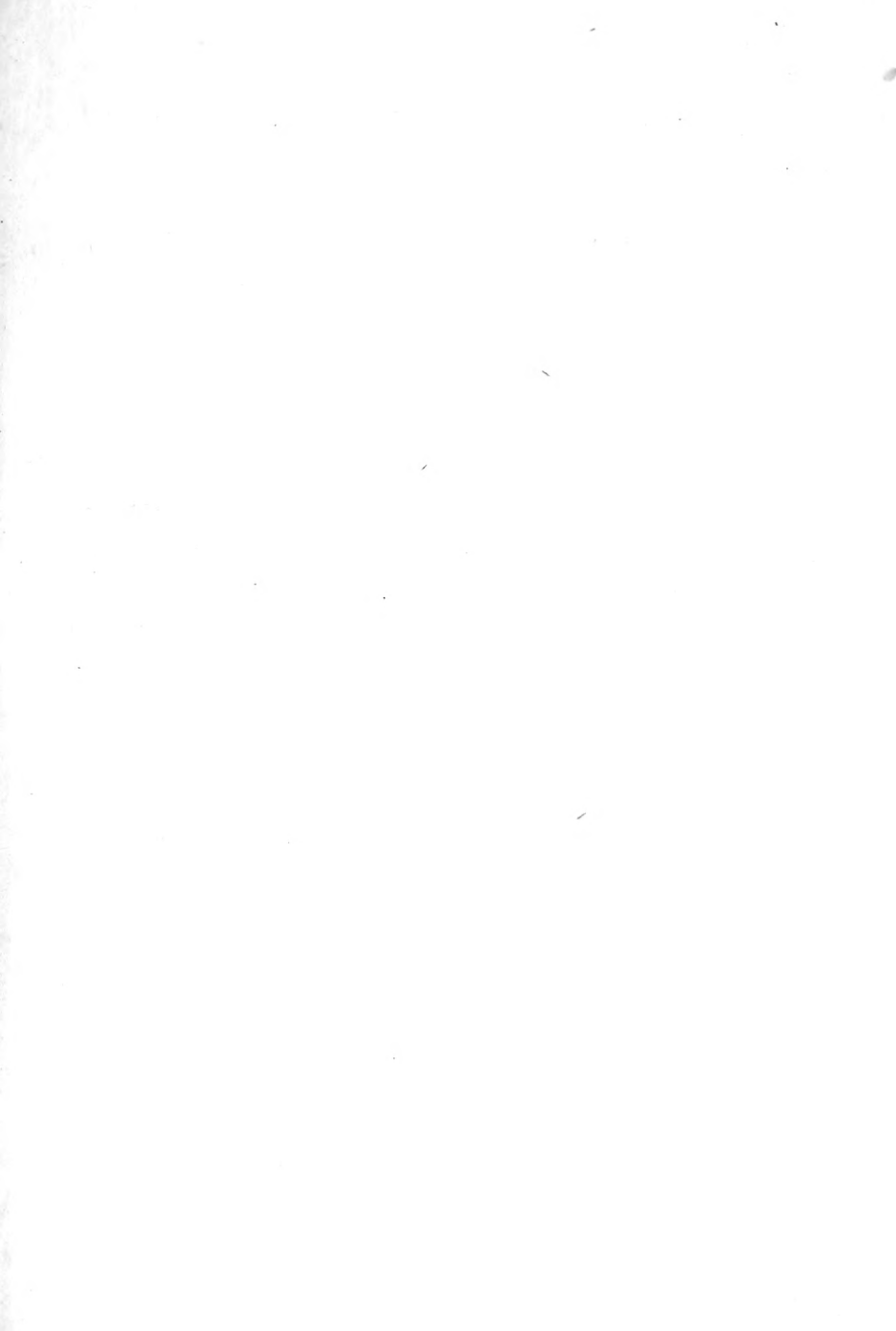
Charles Doudswell

from

Walter Robinson

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VER LYRÆ

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SELECTED POEMS

OF

CHARLES NEWTON-ROBINSON

WITH SEVEN NEW LYRICS



LONDON: LAWRENCE AND BULLEN, LTD.

16 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1896

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The poems in this volume, excepting only the seven new lyrics to which dates are affixed, have been chosen from among those published in *The Golden Hind* (George Bell and Sons, 1880), *Tintinnabula* (Kegan Paul and Co., 1890), and *The Viol of Love* (John Lane, 1895).

VER LYRÆ.

A SONG OF SPRING.

I AM the Spirit of all delight,
Who fashioneth all things fair !
Darkness and light know the spell of my might
In the fervorous kiss of the air :
I come without word, unespied and unheard :
I float not on wave, nor on wing ;
Yet the wide world's face, in its newly-won grace,
Divines me, adores me, reveals me—the
Spring !

Silent I come,
For my birds yet are dumb,
While Earth in her snow-grave lies :
Into her trancèd visage I peer
And breathe a warm breath
On that semblance of death,
Till verdure dissolveth her bier,
And her winterly shroud
Like a storm-riven cloud
Is melted away from her eyes !

The steeds of the sea
Toss and tumble in glee,
As I rove through its infinite room,
O'er the purple sea-grasses,
In tremulous masses,
Alert in the luminous gloom :

From harbour and sound,
Long Winter-bound,
With pearly sails out-swelled,
On the roof of the tide
The glad ships glide
'Twixt heaven and ocean held :

In the flash of the foam,
The great fish roam,
 And scatter the sparkling fry :
On the hoar cliff's crest,
Where the sea-birds nest,
 Hark to the youngling's cry !

To the moor and the fen
Of the Norland men,
 I carry the kiss of the South :
The cuckoo, the swallow, the nightingale follow :
The harebell and primrose, in thicket and hollow,
 Upleap at a word of my mouth !

My father the Sun watches over my days,
 And under the shadows of eve,
When his ardour is quenched in the curfew haze,
 Untiring, my task I achieve :
Till the lady Moon
With her stealthy shoon
 And her lantern of wildering light,
And the stars in their ways,
Wend mutely agaze
 At the work of the wonder-wright !

But when the new leaf blesses
 The gnarly vines of Trent :
When apple-blossom tresses
 The orchard-leas of Kent :
When the pink may and the white may
 Are scintillant with gems,
And the passion-wrought laburnum
 Fires the green lawns of Thames :
When the oak is wreathed in yellow ;
 But the sluggard ash not yet :
When the song that hath no fellow
 The nightingales forget :
When the lilac's hue is altering,
 And the early hay is mown :
When the cuckoo's note is faltering,
 And the first wild rosebud blown :
On a sudden : on a morrow :
To their wonder ; to their sorrow :
 Men are ware that I have left them as I came
But softly Summer nears,
 While they dream in awed surprise,
And with deep delight of tears
 Fills their hearts and blinds their eyes :
 —And I am but a memory—a name !

April, 1896.

I HEARD a broken echo in the night ;
But not the voice it mocked :
I heard the restless rumour of the wave,
Saw not the ships it rocked :
The voice of one who prayed with gushing sobs
I heard, but not his prayer ;
Yet now on tacit lips I read
Their converse with despair.

28th March, 1896.

SI VIS PACEM, PARA BELLUM !

NOW ; in this time of menace and mishap,
O Britain ! when through either hemisphere,
In strange accord, the rulers of great realms
Inflame to madness their unthinking hosts,
With vulgar threats, of greed and envy born,
Against thy peaceful, ocean-scattered sons,
Who do the world's work for mere just reward :
Brace thou thyself ! look round thee, near and far !
Godward and manward blameless that thou be,
First sure, as in man's frailty sureness lies,
Then give to snarling impotence, wild wrath,
And envious hate, full justice, measured out
With no less liberal and than those deserve
Who mannerly put orward temperate claims !
But if this not sufficeth, tell thy sons,
Whether in these thrice-fortunate isles they dwell,
Or 'neath the Southern Cross, or Polar star,
Thy trust, thy heart, thy wealth, thy arms are theirs !
And as thou didst affront and didst destroy
Erstwhile, the overshadowing force of Spain
And after, greater grown, but still as true

To God and self, and careful of the right,
Didst break the arm of Hell's hegemony,
When France and Europe at Napoleon's nod,
Conspiring, strove to drown thee in the past :
So now, more great than ever, and if now,
More bare for wounding by thy very bulk,
Yet brighter-shielded in the hearts of men,
By long renown for noble aims and deeds,
This third time, to thy past wilt thou be true !

7th January, 1896.

LONDON IDYLLS.

WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, IN THE MORNING.

THEY troop across the vibrant arch,
—Lithe lads and rosy girls ;
Who bring their country vigour here
To throb great London's heart.

As brisk they tread, as bright their mien,
In this fresh morning air,
As jaded will they straggle home
When evening spreads her pall.

And here are women, shrunk and wan,
And worn, decrepit men ;
Who wrought for London all their lives :
What ripe reward is theirs ?

Some that remorseless flood will shroud
And hearse them forth to sea ;
But most the monster city slays
By starving at her breast !

All are but as the bricks to build
The cruel Babel-tower ;
That ever crumbling at the foot,
Still craneth at the skies !

Yet, like the universe divine,
Cold, passionless and rich ;
Vast ransom London yields to them
That grip her by the throat.

Strive, strive away health, youth and strength,
And thou from her shalt wring,
Such boon as dauntless Jacob had
By wrestling with his God !

Power, and the knowledge of thyself,
Gold, leisure, great renown :
All these, and countless riches more,
Lie clenched in London's hand !

10th February, 1896.

A ROMANCE OF THE STREETS.

I WALK to Town by crowded ways
Oft in the morning early :
The sights I see, the sounds I hear,
Move pity, wonder, even fear ;
But gladness,—rarely.

When at the crossing, day by day,
I turn to Lincoln's Inn,
The same small sweeper begs of me,
—A lad so pale and thin,
That much I doubt the sweeping trade
Half starves the manikin.

A hard and sordid world it is,
This of the London streets !
Yet, now and then, a sunny ray
Across the darkness fleets.
The sweeper's days are not all sad
Even his world, by fits, is glad.

This very morning what saw I,
In passing near his haunt ?
A tiny girl-mite, plump and round,
Beside his figure gaunt ;
A ten-year-old, bright, foreign birdie,
Chirping to the hurdygurdy.

The pretty child had hazel eyes,
Large lips that pout to kiss,
And soft Italian, sunburnt cheeks ;
For not a month it is
Since for some fœtid London alley,
Her parents left their Lombard valley.

A gay bandanna neckerchief
Was tied below her chin ;
A rude rough pair of sandal-shoes
Her ten toes nestled in ;
Her shawl ! you seldom see its fellow
For startling hues,—her frock, bright yellow.

She stood, half-scared, among the crowd
That hasted careless by,
The hurdygurdy's grating wheel

Her baby hands made fly ;
While notionless of tune or time,
The baby mouth sang seesaw rhyme.

I must have frowned, and shut my ears,
But that beforehand started tears ;
For at the quaint musician's side
My starveling sweeper stood tongue-tied,
Rapt, joyous, still, and wonder-eyed.

He watching her, she watching him,
Between her tresses curly ;
He thought she played like Joachim,
She deemed him as the Anakim,
—So big, and tall, and burly.

His very rags to her are dear,
Her clamour cannot shock his ear
For love can be as deaf as blind,
And his makes music of her noise,
And to her foes—big dogs and boys—
Nerves him a champion dread ;
She, gratefully and shyly kind,
Divides with him her bread

PERDITA.

F AIR among fair faces, hers will ever haunt me,
As 'twere some strayed angel's, erring un-
aware :

A child's and yet a woman's ; innocently wayward,
And veined indicibly with tracks of tears.

Through and through the motley crowd of Piccadilly,
In her passing, women heed her not :
Now and then a man will turn and watch her,
Mute compassion trembling on his lip.

Slow she saunters on her little tired feet,
Glancing rarely to the right or left ;
Perhaps too gaily dressed, and not quite neatly ;
Her thin skirt frayed with walking, flecked with
mud.

Still sweet and gracious are her eyes, and seldom
Meet or avoid those of the passers-by.
Is she afraid of gibes, ashamed of pity,
Or all inconscient is the trivial brain ?

Strange !—with such eyes—twin worlds of sea-blue
beryl ;

Pellucid as fresh water-drops in flowers ;
Eyes to unseal all secrets, or tell nothing,
As mystic orbs whereon magicians muse.

Over them droop silk fringes of brown eyelash,
Hung in the shadowy arches of the brow,
That underlie its dome of living ivory,
And radiant hair, like shreds of morning gold.

All in her face is beautiful, no sculptor
Could ever match me in the molten bronze,
Her palpitating cheek's pale, blushless contour,
Nostril and ear like lucent ocean-shells :

And tiny mouth, its full, pink lips just parting,
Between a welcome and a shy adieu ;
For all about her moves a timorous wildness,
Plastic only to pulsating life.

Ah me ! the faint mementos of past sorrow,
That linger round those eyes, too dry of tears,
Are but as lying epitaphs, that smother
Griefs far too great for that small shallow heart.

These are forgotten : would that aught could wake
them,

To warn her from the bitter, bitter end !
But she is lost, and only with pleased wonder
Wears a new life, not yet a galling chain.

See there ! like Satan masquing as a satyr,
One links an arm in hers, she yields, and laughs :
And in a moment all her wretched story
Is writ at large around those altered eyes.

March, 1896.

A CRY OF THE STREETS.

“BUY a light ! buy a cigar light !”
 Pitiful whine ! I hear it yet,
 And see her shivering, cold and wet,
In the star-light—in the star-light :
A woman’s form, but an eldritch hag !
 When I turn, her face to see,
 White as a skull on a gallows tree,
With a bonnet-remnant of murky rag,
Like the felon’s last lock of tangled hair,
Fluttering loose in the ice-cold air !
The chilly moon set early to-night,
And it wants eight hours to the dawning light.
Like a wicked spirit in ire or fright,
The north gale sweeps the empty street
With fitful showers of biting sleet,
It has blown the flaring gas-lights out,
And driven the starving tramps to rout :
The only sound, as I homeward pace,
 One lone policeman’s rigid tread,
The echoing length of Portland Place,

Half-muffled on the pavement dead,
And the chimes that brokenly noise the hour
From many a near and far-off tower,
For London is fast asleep ;
And who that can help it would vigil keep ?
And now again all sounds are still,
But for some railway whistle, shrill,
Wafted miles by the stifled gale,
That chokes and would shriek, but can only wail !

Silent and black the houses frown,
Looking coldly and careless down
On the homeless wretch in the star-light
And mixing with the windy woe,
Again I hear the whimper low,

“ Buy a light ! buy a cigar light ! ”

While fearful of the beggars' law.

We lightly heed who live at ease,
She proffers, with hand like a sick bird's claw,

One frowsy box of damp fuses :

“ Buy a light ! buy a cigar light ! ”

And O, the pity !

Wealthy city !

There should be any like her to-night.

BALLADS.

NOTE ON "THIESSALÉ."

"And thanne passen Men thorghe the Isles of Colos and of Lango; (*another name for Cos*) of the which Iles Ypocras was Lord offe. And some Men seyn, that in the Ile of Lango is zit (*yet*) the Doughtre of Ypocras, in forme and lyknesse of a gret Dragoun, that is an hundred Fadme of lengthe, as Men seyn: For I have not seen hire. And thei of the Iles callen hire, Lady of the Lond. And sche lyethe in an olde Castelle, in a Cave, and schewethe twyes or thryes in the Zeer (*year*). And sche dothe non harm to no Man, but zif Men dou hire harm. And sche was thus chaunged and transformed, from a fair Damysele, in to lyknesse of a Dragoun, be a Goddess, that was clept Deane. And Men seyn, that sche schalle so endure in that forme of a Dragoun, unto the tyme that a Knyghte come, that is so hardy, that dar come to hire and kisse hire on the Mouthe: And then schalle sche turne azen to hire owne Kynde, and ben a Woman azen. But afre that sche schalle not liven longe. And it is not longe sithen, that a Knyghte of the Rodes, that was hardy and doughty in Armes, seyde that he wolde kyssen hire. And whan he was upon his Coursere, and wente to the Castelle, and entred in to the Cave, the Dragoun lifte up hire Hed azenst him. And whan the Knyghte saw hire in that Forme so hidous and so horrible, he fleyghe away. And the Dragoun bare the Knyghte upon the Roche, mawgre his Hede; and from that Roche, sche cast him in to the See; and so was lost bothe Hors and Man. * * * * * And sithen hidrewards, myghte no Knyghte se hire, but that he dyede anon. But whan a Knyghte comethe, that is so hardy to kiss hire, he schalle not dye; but he schalle turne the Damysele in to hire righte Forme and Kyndely Schapp, and he schal be Lord of alle the Contreyes and Iles above seyd."—From "The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, Kt.," Cap. IV. p. 23 of Mr. J. O. Halliwell's edition, 1839.

THESSALÉ.

SWEET listener to the running of my rhyme,
Bid all the world a little while farewell !
Forgetting place and circumstance and time,
And for the tale of grammarye I tell,
Forgetting all the guerdon of men's tears,
Hopes, thought, and labour of two thousand years !

Like dizzy dreams that vanish in still day,
Like noisy days that set in sober night,
Ill memories must hide themselves away,
And idle thought sleep somewhere out of sight,
Before the most enchanting tale can bind
In one the many issues of the mind !

There dwelt in Cos, the sage Hippocrates,
When this old earth was not so old as now,
And he by magic spell had stolen the keys
That lock'd the secrets of the world below ;
And thither went, and sought them out, and then,
Some say, he was the wisest of all men !

But men were simple in that early age,
And little of deep wisdom reckon'd they :
At last, in sorrow, the great archimage
Burnt up the book wherein that wisdom lay ;
" Better," he said, " that all should be forgot
Than be the sport of them that heed it not !

" I cannot make the ages faster flee,
I cannot lead men suddenly to sense,
Which for the toil of half eternity
Should be the proud and seemly recompense !
And never shall I witness the world's prime,
For I was born too soon, before my time !"

Yet all his life the sage did often use
The secrets that were garner'd in his brain,
And all men knew that if he did but choose,
He had a charm to charm away all pain,
To make men beautiful, and give them health !
So at his feet sick wretches threw their wealth :

And he grew richer than a miser's dream !
But what to him were all his heaps of gold ?
He only ate dry bread, and drank the stream,

That pure and bright before his palace roll'd ;
One single joy his lonely heart could move :
—Sweet Thessalé,—the daughter of his love !

So day by day this idol's form and mind
Flew into shape beneath his perfect care :
High thought, high deed, and beauty, all combined ;—
Olden Pygmalion saw naught so fair
When the stone call'd him suddenly, and he
Beheld his handiwork live, breathe, and be !

And in the glory of her loveliness,
Sweet, innocent, and hardly seventeen,
He dower'd her like a Lydian princess,
And gave his daughter, nothing loth, I ween,
To Ion, noblest of the island youth,
Brave, handsome, full of love and full of truth.

But Artemis, the goddess ever chaste,
For ever planning for young lovers woe,
Beheld, and from the night-sky flew in haste,
That overhung the Archipelago ;
And when the setting moon hid her last ray,
She bore that lovely maiden far away !

And when the morrow for the wedding rose,
The many guests together flock'd in vain ;
Wide was the searching in the woods of Cos,
But never saw they Thessalé again !
And there was loud lament and weeping wild,
For all men loved the sage and his fair child.

Hippocrates died in a foreign land,
But the last word he breathed was "Thessalé !"
And hapless Ion fell by his own hand ;
He could not live where was not Thessalé !
But long amid the shadows of the dead,
Alone they two did sorrowfully tread !

For in her silver planet, Artemis
Kept Thessalé, still young, with cruel care :
Though all her soothing words came all amiss,
And hollow kindness only bred despair ;
Since not for all the spells the goddess tried,
Could Thessalé forget she was a bride !

So the cruel goddess, wearied out at last,
What time her dynasty was overthrown,
And o'er the western heaven overcast,

The sunlight of the holy cross had flown,
And she was wrestling with her mortal pain,
Set Thessalé down on this earth again.

But for a monument of spiteful wrong,
She call'd up dire enchantment to her aid,
And by a spell that maiden ever young
Was like a scaly dragon foully made :
Loathsome, and large, and horrible to see,—
To tell aught more were shame to Thessalé !

And in a castle deep in woody Cos,
She set the dragon-maiden evermore :
Grimly it was, and girt with wall and fosse,
With foetid exhalations brimming o'er ;
And all around it there was hung a spell,
Too pitiless almost to hear or tell !

This was that spell : that hopeless of escape
Should she remain that anger'd Artemis ;
Till some brave knight who fear'd not her foul shape
Those dragon-lips might resolutely kiss ;
Then should she be once more a maiden young,
But afterwards should not live very long !

So in that keep thus linger'd she forlorn,
 Loathly without, for that sweet soul within
While century on century was born
 And buried with its load of toil and sin ;
For long it was ere any found the gate
That guarded not that castle desolate !

But when thy story, my sweet dragon-maid !
 Went through the lands of lordly Christendom,
Full many a true knight swore by his good blade,
 If he might ever by God's helping come
To that foul spot where thou wert kept in thrall,
Life, honour, ladies' love, for thee to venture all !

Then came the knights of burning Italy
 And all the islets of the Southern main,
And from the borders of the Biscay sea,
 Fared all the chivalry of France and Spain ;
But they who landed on that spell-bound shore
Look'd once on those foul lips, and looked no
 more !

And ever thus thy weary life went on,
 With sweet hope ever near, but ever far ;
Since out of all those gallant knights, not one

Would kiss those lips for pity—such men are !
And thou wer't dwelling there in his day still,
Says the far-traveller, John de Mandeville.

But, else I dream, there came at last a knight
Of Britain, true of heart, and young and brave,
Who rode blindfolded up the castled height,
And, looking not, the kiss of pity gave !
Then tore in haste the bandage from his head,
And saw, no dragon, but a fair maid—dead !

March, 1878.

HARING OF HORN.

FREDERICK d'Alva,
 Fiend out of hell !
Hemmed in proud Haarlem,
 Leaguered it well ;
None let he enter,
 Gentle or knave ;
None let he leave it,
 But for the grave !

Then wrote the burghers,
 —Wrote it in blood,
Pinned on a dove's wing—
 “ Give us but food,
William of Orange !
 Staunch are we all ;
Yet if we starve, then
 Haarlem must fall ! ”

Light though his treasure,
 Succour he sent ;
Few though his army,
 Freely they spent

Blood for their brothers,
On the dyke side
One against seven
Venged ere they died.

Such odds the stoutest
Long cannot stay.
Woe unto Haarlem !
Once they give way.
Ha ! they retreat now,
Sore overpressed !
Many are butchered,
On the dyke's crest.

"Who dares the hot foe
Here to abide,
Where the dyke narrows,
Midst of the tide ?
"That will I gladly,
All hope forlorn ! '
Manfully answered
Haring of Horn.

On came the Spaniards,
Thirsting for blood ;

Well was the way barred !

Backward they stood.

On came the Spaniards,

Burning for shame ;

Little recked Haring

How many came !

“ Harder you push me,”

Shouts he in scorn,

“ Harder you’ll find me,

—Haring of Horn !”

Thus a full half hour,

Stands he at bay,

Watching the rearmost

Safely away.

Now from his fresh wounds

Quick the blood flows ;

“ Ask and have quarter !”

Tempt him the foes.

Prouder his glance is,

Louder his scorn :

“ Only of God begs

Haring of Horn !”

“Still knows he one way
Freedom to save !”
Speaking, he plunges
Into the wave !
Bolder no heart is,
Truer no arm ;
God be his buckler,
Shield him from harm !

A BALLAD OF THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY.

PART I.

SHORT summons gave King Edward,
Short summons wanted we ;
But more than thirty thousand men
We crossed the Narrow Sea,
And very cold our welcome was
In sunny Normandy !

We burnt Barfleur and Cherbourg,
The cities of the coast ;
And like a whirlwind raging on,
We wrecked St. Lo, we ravaged Caen,
And if we did not sack Rouen
The burghers cannot boast ;
For we saw their frightened faces
Behind the bulwarks plain ;
But the only bridge was broken
That spanned the surging Seine ;
And we were bound for Paris,
So gave the leaguer o'er,

And onward pressed to rap our best
Upon King Philip's door,—
To fire St. Germain, fire St. Cloud
His very eyes before !

But when the sun of August
Had turned the corn to gold,
And we used our swords for reaphooks,
The Frenchmen grew more bold ;
For bitterly they grudged us
The eating of their bread,
And weak to fight they judged us,
With many sick or dead,
And many home at harvest,
And not a few at sea,
Till out of thrice ten thousand,
We were but one in three ;
While round the oriflamme of France
There flocked from every hand,
Beneath the banners of their lords,
The legions of the land.

Hard rode the scouts the news to bring,
They saw Bohemia's blind old king
Keep state in Philip's camp !

D'Alençon's count, and he of Blois,
And John of rich Hainault ;
While not three marches off made halt
The hireling lances of Savoy,
All men of sturdy stamp ;
And more redoubted yet than these,
Full twice our force of Genoese,
Who drew the steel crossbow :
For not till after did we know
That all their engines, all their craft
Could never match the clothyard shaft
Old England's yew can throw !

But only fools give battle
Cooped up as in a pen,
Deep in a hostile country,
When odds are one to ten ;
So day and night, and night and day,
We pressed upon our seaward way,
To snatch from Godemar du Fay
The passage of the Somme ;
For such a hot pursuit was kept,
Eight nights together scarce we slept,
So close the French had come ;

And gained we not the river
To fend us from the foes,
Slight hope was to deliver
Our bodies from the crows !

Late marched we on the morrow
Till falling of the dew,
And halted at the hamlet
Of Crécy, in Ponthieu.
Then a bold word spake King Edward :
“ Here let us take our stand !
Here will I wait mine enemy
Upon my mother's land ;
For to my mother Crécy
Belongs of marriage right,
And here let Philip Valois
Make good his claim in fight ! ”

Then into three battalions
The host he parted out,
The first and foremost of them
The Prince of Wales about ;
And with the prince were chosen,

The onset to abide,
The flower of England's chivalry,
Her bulwark and her pride.

Marshal of all rode Warwick's earl,
Next Oxford's courage rare,
With Kentish Cobham's warrior-lord,
Bourchier and Delaware ;
While ever to be near the Prince
Had fiery Chandos care.
Neville and Clifford, peers of fame,
With Latimer, not backward, came ;
And knightly Harcourt's honoured name
Rang through the morning air
From lip to lip ; nor be forgot
Mauley's and Stafford's temper hot,
And Holland's eye of flame !

Yet none the less the French array
Kept gathering, from the break of day
Until the heat of noon ;
And round us, where we stood at bay,
The space of half a mile away,
Closed in a great half-moon.

As when the Netherlander,
 Behind his bulwark frail,
Sees bear on him the billows
 Blown skyward by the gale,
And fears the marshland acres,
 Which from the waves he won,
Four fathom deep will founder
 Before the tide has done ;
And trembles for his homestead,
 And trembles for his life ;
But like a man builds up the breach
 For home and child and wife :—
So we behind our breastwork
 Made head to that great host ;
Though not a soul among us all
But deemed himself or dead or thrall,
 —The fight already lost ;
Till forward came King Edward
 And rode from rank to rank ;
(A milk-white wand was in his hand,)
 His look so free and frank,
That but to gaze upon him
 Roused every fainting heart,
As graciously he smiled, and prayed

Each man to do his part,
For God, for England, and the right
And honour of his king,
And all the glory such a fight
To every man must bring ;
For be it won, or be it lost,
To such an overwhelming host,
Full wide the fame would ring !

PART II.

The space of half a mile away
Was halted still the French array ;
Bright glinted in the clear noon-day
Their lances' points, their pennons gay ;
And helm and corslet, sword and shield
Flashed lightly as the horses wheeled,
And plunged and tramped upon the ground,
With dull, confused, and threat'ning sound.
Now forth four knights came pricking,
Their port was proud and high,
Within an arrow-flight they came,
Our order to espy.

The foremost rode the Lord le Moyne

(We knew him by the shield

Which, after, with his life he left

Upon the stricken field).

The names I mind not of the rest,

Though each proud helm bore figured crest,

And each, before he rode away,

Scanned every link of our array.

One only turned to jeer and laugh,

Because we seemed so few,

And glancing back with scornful look,

Tall in his stirrup rose, and shook

His gauntlet ;—then we knew

King Philip soon would try the right

And title to Ponthieu.

And surely, ere an hour had sped

The Frenchmen swarmed in front and
flanks ;

But like some rabble loosely led,

Soon as they met us face to face,

Their vanguard started back apace

At sight of our close-ordered ranks,

Each man in his appointed place.

Backward and forward as they swung
Through all King Philip came ,
A short while bent he on us
A dark eye, lit with flame ;
The red blood rose in his sallow cheek,
Black hate was at his heart ;
Then even to our farthest rear
His harsh voice made men start :
“ In God’s name, and Saint Denis,
I will that we engage !
Now forward with my Genoese,
And let them earn their wage ! ”

Slow drew the bowmen to the fore
As much against their will,
And while their tired and wavering ranks
As yet were ordered ill,
Great marvels in the sky appeared :
A cloud,—no common cloud !—
That high its billowy crest upreared,
Swept over, thundering loud.
Between the armies aimed its track,
And all the sky behind was black
And fluttering, screaming, on before,

Like angry scolds at blows,
The whole sky o'er did wheel and soar
A countless host of crows.
Yet not to right nor left they drew,
But straight between the foul birds flew !

And in their wake the air did shake,
The lightning flashes quiver ;
Like great sea-waves the thunder brake,
The cloud did whirl and sliver ;
And of this marvel, under breath,
The wise among us said
It was a sign of battle dour,
Where blood should freely shed !

Now when at last the Genoese
Took heart with us to close,
From van to rear the word ran clear,
“ Advance ! and spring your bows ! ”
Forward they came, ten steps or more,
Fell sight it was to see !
Then with a shout the air they tore,
But not a limb stirred we ;
Though twice again with might and main

They shouted awesomely ;
And on the third cry sharp and loud,
Their bolts came at us like a cloud !

But rain had sapped their bow-strings
And marching made them tired,
And right before their faces
The sunset flamed and fired ;
So many a bolt at random flew,
And many a bolt fell short,
And truly, after such ado,
Such little harm made sport !

But when these foreigners had felt
The limit of their tether,
Up rose our English archers,
All silent, all together,
And each man took one step in front,
And each to ear drew feather :
Fore God ;—the arrows from their bows
Flew thick and white as fly the snows,
In wild and wintry weather ;

What screams of pain and horror !
What crowding in affright !

When on the foreign bowmen fell
That fearful arrow-flight ;
While hot-head Frenchmen strove to hack
Through all the press a bloody track
To pierce to our assault ;
And still amid the densest rout,
Our archers shot their quivers out,
Where no aim was at fault.

PART III.

Now thanks be to the archers
The fight was well begun,
On the famous field of Crécy,
At setting of the sun ;
And thanks be to the archers
The twilight fell before
The onset of the mounted knights
And men-at-arms we bore ;
When fierce d'Alençon smote us,
With Flanders, good at pinch,
And all their vassal lances ;
Yet could not make us flinch ;
For we around the Prince of Wales

Gave backward not an inch ;
But thrust for thrust, and blow for blow
We rendered back again ;
And hard, I trow, it was to know
Who slew, and who were slain.

On stout d'Alencon's helmet
Did Chandos ring his knell ;
The valiant Count of Flanders
To earth did Cobham fell ;
Yet wilder grew the mêlée,
And sorely we were pressed ;
The stout Savoyards gave us
Nor breathing time nor rest.
They came on by the thousand,
As billows of the sea ;
But like his rock-girt island
Around the Prince stood we !

Keen on the watch, Northampton's earl
Scented our parlous plight ;
No whit too soon he cried to aid.
Ah ! 'twas a gladdening sight
To see his fresh battalion,
With many a lord and knight,

And nigh two thousand yeomen,
All chafing for the fight,
Come striding in their order
Full cheerly, with a cheer,
Through to the battle's border
Quick pressing from the rear !
Down dropped the German foemen
As trees before the blast ;
Like sheep ran Genoa's bowmen ,
Savoy fell back at last !

"Thanks, brave Northampton, thanks !

Warwick cried :

" Noble peers, gallant knights,
Close your ranks ! close your ranks !
Bear the wounded to the rear !
Bide the foe ; have no fear
But he'll charge us once again,
And the turning of the tide
Is not yet !
Look ! the lancers of Lorraine
Are thick upon the plain !
Man to man, spear to spear,
Be they met !

“ But thou, Sir Thomas Norwich,
 Spur to the King and say,
‘ Sire, on the word of Warwick !
 The field is yours to-day,
If but your own battalion
 May join us in the van !
Now forward with the standard,
 And forward every man !

“ ‘ The Prince, and we about him,
 Who bear the battle’s brunt,
Are hard beset—our wounds are wet,
 Our blades are waxing blunt ;
Our arms grow weak, and we are few ;
 We stand, and do not blench,
But scarce may we avail to rout
 The remnant of the French.’ ”

The good knight pricked his charger’s flank,
 Flew bounding up the hill,
And sharp drew rein before the King,
 Hard by the very mill
That still is on the windy top,
 From whence he might descry

The changing fortune of the field,
Plain underneath his eye.

But when Earl Warwick's charge was told,
Sternly King Edward said :
" My son is he but overborne ?
Or is he stark and dead ?
Or hath he such a grievous wound,
That all his strength is sped ? "

" Not so, Sir King ! " the knight returned,
" But rudely set upon !
And may the Prince but have your aid,
He counts the battle won ! "

" Back ! " quoth the King, " Back ! back again !
To those from whom you hied,
And straitly charge my son and them,
That whatso'er betide,
So long as breath is in his lips,
They ask no aid of me !
Let the boy win his spurs, I say !
For an God's will it be,
Mine is, the day shall be his own,
The honour his and theirs alone ! "

Now not a man but when he heard
Drew courage from King Edward's word.
And, glory be to God on high !

Great deeds of arms were wroken,
The stout Lorrainers, forced to fly,

Like wasted waves were broken.
By Heaven ! English hearts are true,
And reck not, though they be but few ;
And English arms are stout and strong !
Fierce was the battle, though not long,
And ours the mast'ry ; yet amid
All feats of arms the darkness hid,
Bohemia still may vaunt with pride
Her ancient king's last knightly ride !

His charger in the forefront paced
Soon as the fight grew hot ;
A grey beard from his gorget flowed,
Visor his helm had not ;
But three white ostrich feathers
Were waving in his crest,
And large of mould, though few and old,
His knights around him pressed.

Bolt upright in the saddle sat
The man of eighty winters ;
He heard the wave of battle break,
The hissing noise the arrows make,
The stifled moan of man and horse,
The heavy fall of corse on corse,
When axe and sword on armour crashed
And horse and man to earth were dashed,
And lances flew to splinters ;
And he spake to the Lord le Moyne, say they,
Who live to tell the tale—
(Never a trustier knight had he
Than the lord of towered Basèle,)—
And the words of the King were, “How goeth
the fight?”
And the truth he heard from his trusty
knight.

“Ha!” said the King, “ill doth it ring!
How fareth Charles, my son, this day!”
One answered him, “We know not, sire!
But think he joineth in the fray.”
For the bitter truth none wished revealed,
That the craven already had left the field.

The King reined in his charger ;
 “ Brothers in arms ! ” cried he,
“ All friends of mine and lieges,
 Brave gentlemen, are ye !
And since these eyes are sightless
 Give aid unto your lord,
And lead me far enough to strike
 One good stroke of my sword ! ”

They looked at one another,
 All silent for dismay ;
They saw their death before them,
 Yet would not disobey ;
They tied their reins together,
 His vassals old and gray ;
And so they led their old blind king
 Right forward in the fray.

They fell upon our archers,
 And broke them through and through ;
They fell upon our foremost ranks,
 Like valiant men and true ;

But round them closed the archers,
And set on them again,
And in the darkness of the night
Down dropped they with the slain

THE VIOL OF LOVE.

THE VIOL OF LOVE (*Viola d'Amore*) is an instrument said to derive its beautiful name from the "sympathetic" strings, usually seven in number, with which it is fitted below the finger-board. These are never touched by hand or bow, but vibrate of themselves, with a rain of concords and harmonies, in response to the notes which are sounded by the player.

THE SONGS TO THE VIOL.

SONGS, like dreaming chrysalids,
When the fateful heart-fire bids,
At the bursting of the rose,
Loose their prisoned embryos !
Large in passionate surprise
Flame the wonder-weaving eyes !
Wide in sun-warm rapture spread,
Moisture-welded wings unwed,
Ardent in the noon to dare
Pulsings of the vagrant air,
And eager to be full unfurled
For the exploring of the world !

Thou, sweet music's last adept !
Viol, whom Love's bow hath swept !
Viol, whom no meaner hand
Ever lifted, ever spanned !
Songs new-born, to thee we come,
In our first flight, faltering, dumb ;

Yet Love's children ! Let our wings
Only lightly brush thy strings,
Wake the chords, and we shall hear
Music mute for loveless ear,
And drink of that sole fount, in truth,
Pregnant of eternal youth ;
Yet, adolescent in an hour,
Keep for ever childhood's flower !

LOVE CHALLENGED.

LOOK thou on me not lightly, Love !
Provoke but once, with herald eyes ;
Then take all vantages of war,
—Trick, stratagem, surprise !

For so do I condemn and hate
The loveless ranks that I am in ;
As lief would I desert as fight,
And liefer lose than win !

I court an ambush, crave a hurt,
And beg no other, meeter doom,
Than donning fetters, Love ! of thine !
Quick ! find me prison-room !

LOVE IN THE CLOUDS.

ALL fairest things have joy in loneliness ;
For they are timid that are pure in heart,
Of taint or malison of spirits vile.
So the pure cloud shuns the befoulèd earth,
Soaring, and shedding from far beneficent rain.
And she, for whom not earthly is my love,
Moves among men alone. She suffers not
Into her soul's bright mirror depths to peer ;
But concentrating all the sun of joy,
Reflects it in such dazzling purity
That all the world would gaze ; but cannot bear
The glory long, and so pass out of ken,
Happy, and full of hope, yet self-ashamed,
—So lit up is their own unworthiness—
And cherishing still the memory of that light,
Look heavenward for more. O happy soul !
She gives ; but not receives,—like some clear
spring,
Leaping unhindered from a cavern's mouth,

High on the footless mountain, pouring down
From inner clefts, mysterious as life,
Water of life for all the dwellers on plains below !

Climb not !—the sunlit, perilous mountain crag,
Serene and sheer—to men that crawl the earth,
Vouchsafes no footing, and the tenuous air
Caressing that unsullied, secular snow,
Ye cannot breathe !—Let the presumptuous wish
Die : and with wonder and love and delight,
Rest ye content ! For as surely as dusk follows
 day,
Climbing to seek the lost source of that marvellous
 fount,
Your souls within you will perish ! O dwell ye
 contented
With glory and beauty above you—and what
 leapeth down
Of the life-giving stream to the poor and low
 habitations of men !

CECILY.

I F at the sudden sight of thee
Joy pulses through my brain,
Not love is this ; but I foresee,
—Fair rose, to bloom so fain !—
The peerless woman thou wilt be,
One day, my sweet girl Cecily !

I gaze beyond thy semblance now,
And in that wide-expanding brow,
With archèd eyes of soft blue-gray
—Like the tender dawn of day,—
Trusting eyes, that dare be seen,
Telling pure thoughts,—nothing mean ;
And in thy bearing, firm and mild,
I see the woman through the child.

Like a perfect image, wrought
Only in the sculptor's thought ;
Like a new song, under breath,
A poet-lover sings ;

Like a late-born butterfly,
 Sunning her moist wings ;
Like a young moon lit anew ;
Like a glad dream, coming true ;
—All delights too fresh to cloy !—
Like all these art thou, my joy !

LOVE IN DREAMS.

(Amoris Imago.)

THIS but in dreams that I have met my love,
And where she walks I know not, on this earth ;
Whose child she is, or what her day of birth ;
And yet what know I not, that love can move ?

Uncalled she came, at dead of morning night,
In such apparel as might angels wear ;
Brown-eyed as breaking dawn ; with golden hair,
As gilds a cloud the first faint shoot of light !

I lay entranced, as if my lips were dumb,
My brain, my sense, for very joy adaze !
Awhile she bent on me her ardent gaze,
Then said, "Thy soul called mine, and so I
come !"

LOVE'S MESSENGERS.

WIND, happy river ! to the sea,
Whereby she dwells who loves not me,
And waft her from this inner moat
The spoils that on thy waters float,
My messengers to be !

Thrice happy river ! wind among
Spring-kissed arbours, green and young,
And waft my love all gentle things
That love has caught on giddy wings,
And on thy mercy flung !

Ay, waft her all thou makest prize
Of birds and bees and butterflies !
And waft her branches new in bud,
Thou reivest from thy banks in flood,
When rain bedims the skies !

Wind, happy river ! to the sea,
And bear these messengers for me ;
But if no kind reply come back
Ere swallows take their southern track
Myself thy spoil will be !

MY LADY'S PORTRAIT.

MY lady walks in gladness,
Like springtide of the year !
Her presence, like rich music, draws
Through stillness, gently near,
And like an all-revealing book,
Her sundered lashes loose her look !

Those eyes are like none other lights
That glow in heaven on starry nights,
True twins in every intent,
As would my heart and hers were bent !
And lustrous each, and brown and large,
—A fair, yet disconcerting targe
For every shaft that mine can fling
With strong desire to fleet its wing,
And straight its arrowy barb to steer,
Dipped in no venom save a tear ;
Which draws its cunning to annoy,
From sheer excessiveness of joy !

Her cheeks no less are shields to turn
The weapon of my lips—a kiss !
So bafflingly they blush and burn,
To make the rude assaulter miss,
Till she may rout him with her eyes'
Revolt, repulse, regret, surprise !

Her hair is of the tawny shade,
That on the firwood boles hath played,
And fretted with the gleams that note
The furtive squirrel's dainty coat.
It shimmers like a diadem
Above her vaulted brow !
Her neck is like the lucent stem
Whence lily-petals flow ;
And 'mid the glory of her face,
The sweet lips dance and rest, in grace.

Her slender hands are supple-strong
To rein the horse, or link the song
To mazy music manifold
The sullen keys would fain withhold :
—To soothe, to flatter, to caress
Her chosen one in dear duress !

And as in metal mirrors dim,
Or in a streamlet's current slim,
Faint semblances of beauty swim,
So let my verse, with reverent art,
Veil, not reveal, her wondrous heart !

Her voice is like the lilt of streams,
—Light, subtly-varied, low.
Her mind is like the orange flower,
That blooms the whole year through
Her moods their magic borrow
From changes of the sea !
Her love is like the morrow !
—What morrow comes for me ?

BLANCHELYS.

BLANCHELYS ! my Blanchelys !
What faileth us of human bliss ?
For as the scholar of the sky,
Waking in a world asleep,
Sees a new star blaze and die,
Alone for him, in heaven's blue deep ;
So, in a flash from eye to eye,
Alone for me did Love betray,
His hidden birth, his bidden stay !
O, take the swallow-winged reply,
Nothing earthly as a kiss !
Voice thou needest not, nor I,
For spirit-commune, Blanchelys !
Grace yet thy garden, Lily-maid !
More fair and pure than song can tell !
And now, in glory yet arrayed,
My moment's love !—farewell !
The sons of men have not a spell
To look on angels, unafraid !

And I have culled the yellow Rose !
See ! upon my palm she glows !
And her petals, on my breast,
In the grave shall still be pressed,
Queenly to their last repose !

Farewell ! for evermore farewell !
Lest she, discrownèd, fade and die,
Long ere her time !
Lest from thy face the glory fly,
As on the stroke of Summer's knell,
Swifter than sound forsakes the bell,
The withering bloom deserts the lime !

Farewell again ! O, fare thee well !
When autumn wind and rain shall flout thee,
When baser souls belaud or scout thee,
Safe girded in Love's armour dwell !
For who can cheat thy heart of this ?
Farewell !—for evermore farewell !
—Yet remember !—Blanchelys !

NOCTIS SUSURRUS.

REST awhile, and hear me, sweet !
Here are none to lurk and spy,
Close the branches round us meet,
Vainly through the blackness pry
Myriad, myriad starry eyes !
We are sheltered from surprise :
Owl and moth alone may see
What shall pass 'twixt thee and me !

It is dark,—and yet not dark !
Light is in those eyes of thine !
Still, so still the night is,—hark !
—I can hear thy heart and mine !
Kiss me, sweet !] and closer press !
Give me back my lips' caress !
If my timid tongue be still,
Think no ill, sweet !—think no ill !

Is it time? Oh, is it time?

Have I served thee long enough?

Will my venture seem a crime?

Dare I ever risk rebuff?

No, I dare not, though I long,

Love himself has tied my tongue!

Lest I lose thee, love! for life,

I fear to whisper, "Be my wife!"

Ah! but thou hast overheard!

Else what means this tell-tale thrill?

Did I breathe a spoken word?

Night so treacherously still!

Forgive me, sweet!—forgive!—forget!

If I am overbold;—but yet—

Press closer, sweet!—when all is told,

Am I? am I—overbold?

SUMMER NIGHT-SCENTS.

DRINK in the fragrant air of night !
Isolta ! strange and dear !

With every fickle sigh that blows
And filters through the hawthorn snows.

O cling, O cling more near !
For sheer delight, for sheer delight,
Drink in with me the air of night !

Since if perchance there be
Some woes of mine that shun thine-ear,
My joys are all for thee !

THE BROOK.

STILL tranced in beauty lingers day :

O leave that thralling book !

And thread with me the meadow-way,

Sweet wife, along the brook !

Twin rivulets are mingled here,

Like our inwoven lives ;

And in one channel, swift and clear,

The broader current strives.

Isolta ! look !

The strenuous brook,

Hurrying over stony shallows,

'Mid the meadowsweet and mallows,

Filtering through the serried rushes,

Now from rock to rock it gushes,

Now in eddying pools it hushes,

Where the grayling dart and shine,

Branch and rootlet softly brushes,

Where the brambles droop and twine :

Then through silent, sunlit reaches,

Where the waterlily swings,

Where the swallow dips her wings,

Flows the brook to lonely beaches :

—There its golden sand it flings !

AD UXOREM.

SWEET fellow-voyager with me,
Through life's unlit, uncharted sea !
My gentle queen ! to whom I own
The fealty of love alone !
Two golden years are gone to-day,
Since first I gloried in your sway,
And sealed my homage with a vow ;
—Years once of hope ; of memory now !—
But happier far, in retrospect,
Than even sanguine Hope had recked,
Peering with her lovelit eyes
Through the future's darkling skies !

RONDEL.

I LISTENED for the footstep light
—With all my heart aglow—
Of one in bridal vesture bright,
This day three years ago ;
When round the village church lay white
The January snow :—
I listened for the footstep light,
With all my heart aglow !

To-day is done the fateful fight
Against a fever foe ;
The sickroom door sets free to-night
One lost and won, and lo !
I listen for the footstep light,
With all my heart aglow !

LOVE UNUTTERED.

MY life reveals my love :
Thereof my soul is proud !

My life reveals my love,
Yet vaunts it not aloud !

For one alone there lives,
My heart's interpreter :
The silence of my soul
Is musical to her !

THE FANE OF LOVE.

TENDERLY, tenderly, heart's delight !
Look forth with me on the past !

Had we forgotten that age could smite

Us too,—at last ?

It weaves the greys in my brown hair's maze ;

It will mar your jessamine cheek ;

While the hours come and go like driven snow,

And a month flits by as a week !

Were we lavish of time in our careless youth ?

Did we play too free with life ?

Tenderly yet, in a spirit of ruth,

Look backward ! O my wife !

We have builded a fane for Love's glory and
pain,

Wrought with unconscious arts :

The glittering spire, in the clouds ever higher,

Is founded far down in our hearts :

And hoarded within are relics rare :—

Sweet memories none but we can share !

Each chapel and bay of the murmurant aisles
Hath an altar at which we adore ;
'Mid souls of dead love-words, and kisses, and
smiles,
That were born on our lips of yore ;
And none but ourselves ever searches or delves,
For the treasures that lie there in store !

THE VIOL TO THE SONGS.

GO! fenced alone in beauty
From dull or churlish ears ;
Elusive, all-invading,
As thistledown,—or tears !
Go forth and sing, my songs
To you the world belongs :
Go, sing at many gates !
Dread no scorn and heed no hates !
Where no hearts throb, no eyes glisten,
Fearless venture, sing and roam !
For surely they who love will listen,
And give my errant songs a home

Travellers aye, and wanderers,
Ether-born as gossamers,
Or gale-blown butterflies :
Fare to North and fare to South,
Over seas and under skies !
Range to East and range to West !
Here and there some gentle mouth

Will breathe you on a wider quest !
Fly with joy then, fly apace !
Here and there some lonely breast,
—Like a ship far out at sea—
Will take my songs an hour to rest !—
—If any find no shelter-place,
Let these return to me !

Gifts will I give to them, fairer by far
Than aught but the light of Love's own star ;
And send them abroad again, tenderer-sweet
Than honey yet unstolen of the bee,
On opalescent wings, more fleet
Than very Love's own firequick feet,
To sail o'er land and sea ;
And sing to the loved one,
As bee doth to clover :
Tell to the lone one
News of the rover :
Hymn to the glad heart
High gratulation :
Seal for the sad heart
Lost love's consecration !

TRAVEL NOTES.

MERIDIEM VERSUS.

STEADILY 'thwart the channel tide
Her paddle-fins my steamer plied,
And like a dazzling diadem
Thickly sown with gem on gem,
Stars in daylight, flashed and shone,
—Sea-children of an April sun,—
The ripples at her stem.
But I was bound for sunnier seas,
Beyond the frozen Pyrenees,
That kiss the shores of Spain ;
Where Barcelona's haven wide
Is gay with argosies that ride
A bluer, brighter main !

So on thy northern threshold, France,
I landed ; not with shield and lance
 As did our sires of eld ;
But swallow-like, with curious zest,
To travel as a flitting guest
 Through heritages held
In thralldom once, by force and fear
Of Crécy, Agincourt, Poitier.

Then gliding on the iron track,
 (New link of conquering France with Spain,
 More close than old bonds forged in vain,)
With often a long look back,
Far, far too fast, I hurried past
 A wide town-studded plain ;
A minster here, a fortress there,
To take it were a king's despair,
 Though oft, I warrant, girt with foes,
 It felt the worst of hunger's throes.
And once there came a glimpse so fair,
The thought has ever since made rise
Sweet tears in too-contented eyes :

A sunlit valley, far below
My track (that on a mountain hung),
Where a bright streamlet wound among
Green meadows mapped like spiders' webs,
And fringed with poplar, elm, and oak,
Tiny as mosses underfoot ;
With white-walled hamlets, breathing smoke,
So far below, they seemed but toys,
At feet of mountain-children scattered :
So far below, life made no noise,
No echoes on the peaks were shattered.
—A heaven of dreams, a haven of rest,
To satisfy a poet's quest !

* * * * *

An evening went, a morning came,
And burning with a clearer flame
Than lights Thames chilly ooze,
I saw the southern sun's red rim
Swift upward from the dark earth swim
By half-awake Toulouse.

As one who seeks and cannot find,
Felt I how far was left behind,
 My verdant, misty home ;
For strange to me the Afric breeze,
And strange the gray-green olive trees,
 Bare vines, and barren loam ;
And yellow oxen, yoke on head,
Before the plough with lurching tread,
 By swarthy peasants driven ;
And rocky rivers dried to rills,
And naked sands, and arid hills,
 Where blade has never thriven.

To sea ! To sea ! arrest not me,
 Sad realm of thirst and fire !
I will not stay, though Carcas ¹ call
Down from her beetling, crag-set wall :
 “ Turn, traveller with the lyre !
Greet me, for I am fair and tall,
 And need no foil of rich attire,
I who am ever young !
Have not I heard sweet odes in many a tongue,

¹ See note p. 91.

Since the old founders of this fortress town
Chose me for guardian of the civic crown,
And wilt thou pass me by, unhailed, unsung?"

"Farewell!" I answered; "mine are willing ears,
And eager eyes; but full, too full, of fears
Thy beauty strange! my love is not so bold
That I may dare a dalliance with thy charms,
To be enwithered in thy scorching arms,
Though ever young, immeasurably old!

"Too many loves, too many lovers, thine!
As many as the years that leave no trace
On thy still, marble face.
What mortal life may link with life divine,
But soon it flickers out and fades away,
As from thy battlements at set of sun
The unregarded glimmer of a day,
That hath been fair, and yet its course hath run!

Farewell !—farewell !—what far-off peaks are these ?

What snowy peaks that scale the sky ?

The Pyrenees ! the Pyrenees !

Their feet are in the summer seas,

And thither bound am I !”

NOTE.

Built into the wall of the very ancient hill city of Carcassonne, near the Narbonne gate, is a female head, rudely carved in grey stone, over which are inscribed the words

“SVM CARCAS.”

This piece of sculpture is said by tradition to represent a Saracen lady called Carcas, not as her own proper name, but because she was reputed the lady and queen of Carcassonne. The story is that after the fortress had been five years invested by Charlemagne, had lost nearly all its defenders and was threatened by famine, this lady with many ingenious stratagems beguiled the emperor into raising the siege. But as soon as his forces began to move away, she ordered the bells to be rung, and throwing open the gates went forth to salute her great adversary, who, admiring her courage and resource, made her a present of the city she had so valiantly defended, and gave her in marriage to one of his peers.

IN BURGOS CATHEDRAL.

THIS liquid eve how loth expires
The radiance of the sunset fires !
And still the deep'ning flood of blue
Forbears to quench their flaming hue,
From all the whilom golden West
By " heavenly alchemy " expressed.

In such a gloaming, once, in Spain,
By stately Burgos' minster fane,
I sat and watched the glory vanish
—As long it hath from all things Spanish—
And not before the evening star
Sailed upward in her silver car,

And chilly dews and bats were free,
Did I arise from reverie,
And steal to tread, by postern door,
The dim cathedral's echoing floor,
Through dusky aisles, where nothing stirs
But pious feet of worshippers,
Who slowly pass from grille to grille,
And thumb their beads, demure and still,
At every altar-sheltering arch
That waits them on their reverent march.

I mused an hour, as rapt as they,
Till dusk had sealed the eyes of day,
And evened with the gloom below
The western window's ruby glow.
Sudden out rang the vesper bell,
It rent the silence, broke the spell.
To touch the flying lamps with flame
The taper-lifting vergers came,
And eager to be purged of sin,
A vulgar, laughing throng pushed in;
Father and mother, son and daughter
Duly besprent with holy water.

Then O ! what hubbub, noise and rustle,
Mundane chatter, coughs and bustle !
But half-abashed for anthem-singing,
Banner-waving, censer-swinging,
Torches flickering, gilt robes glancing,
Priests in solemn file advancing,
With choristers, canonicos
Parting left and right in rows,
—Canonicos obese and puffy,
Canonicos grim, gaunt, and huffy,
Niching each in carven stall ;
But stout or thin, and short or tall,
And whether worldly dogs or purists,
All self-complacent sinecurists !

AN ALPINE GORGE.

O VIA Mala, Via Mala !
Dread, silent-lipped, mysterious mountain-
gate !
Close-barring thought to all that clamours
here,
On London's fringe, in grasp of sullen Winter,
In this fog-poison-laden atmosphere ;
With what austere, keen joyance I remember
That hour of green and silvery September,
When travel-worn, yet eager and elate,
Mere passing questioners, my love and I
Drew converse from thy Sphinx-like solitude,
Where, in a friendly multitude,
From every mossy rift or crannied scar
The hare bell's nod, the daisy's winking eye,
The dandelion's beacon star,
And all fair blossoms of an English May,
To us made signal, "Come this way !"

And so we passed between those walls
Abrupt, where never herdsman calls ;
Where precipice and clambering firs
Dispute the air, and no foot stirs.
And far adown the gorge of night,
The boisterous Rhine, half green, half white,
Foams, doubles, wrestles, rushes, leaps,
Thrice echoed up those dizzy steeps ;
And now in daylight, now in gloom,
Seems ever nearer drawn to doom,
As over minds that greatly dare,
Broods frowning imminence of care.

12th January, 1896.

THE WALLENSEE, SWITZERLAND.

S HIVERING, glimmering,
Quivering, shimmering,
The blue lake drinks the sunlight, sips the breeze.
Dwarfed are those massy poplar trees,
For mountains from its border lines,
Tower, mantled in a million pines,
Save where the harsh crags jut to light,
Or gloom their clefts in noon-day night.
Aloft, upon the azure sky
Their icy peaks like lances break :
Below, their shadowy bulk doth lie
Deep-casketed within the lake.

1st September, 1895.

VARIOUS POEMS.

DISCONTENT.

O DISCONTENT !
Thou art the shadow of my sun of pleasure,
The night that treadeth on day !
Thou art the lover of my listless leisure,
The overflowing of an o'erbrimm'd measure
That idly runneth away !

CEÏX AND ALCYONE.

IN grey October of the sunken year,
When odorous leaves begin to fall away
From stiffening trees, and spread a coverlet
Upon the slumbering earth, O then be mine
Abroad to wander, lonely, unespied !
And into silent fields, far past the cry
Of crowded cities, to where all alone
The homely hedger plies his restless knife :
There let me stray, and slowly wind along
The margin of some willow-border'd brook,
Yellow with whirling leaves, and overhung
With sere decay of summer-tempted trees !
For when the cold wind of a morning dies,
About the half-awakening of mid-noon,
Fair memories of old imagined tales
And happier seasons, and thoughts fallen dead
In utterance, crowd on the enchanted soul,
Wintering within the palace of my brain.
And so I dream of passionate delights
That waned away with foreign-faring spring,

In summer calm ; and ever and anon
Hear snatches of heart-music, unexpress'd ;
Yet sweet beyond the energies of men
That now live,—echoing some earlier tune ;
Such as made holy with sweet harmony
That moving story of old Thessaly,
How by the ocean sat Alcyone
Hoping for Ceyx ; till one watery moon
Changed, and the ripple of a first spring-tide
Wafted his body from the shifting sands,
Over sea-shallows, in among high rocks ;
Where with the sunrise came his fair young queen,
For love and sorrow : for she knew before,
In three nights' dreams the shipwreck of all hope,
And came alone, save that her lame old nurse,
Fearing some evil, follow'd far behind
And she beheld,—ah ! what did she behold ?
The queen gaze down the shadow of the dawn,
Calling out “ Ceyx ! ”—and the body rise,
The wan pale body rise upon the sea,—
And from it fall the panoply of death—
And, vested in the glory of the gods,
The soul of Ceyx cry “ Alcyone ! ”
“ Alcyone ! sweet wife Alcyone ! ”

But she, the queen, all trembling with her love,
Hastily tore Thessalia's diadem
From her pale brow to cast it on the ground :
And without fear or farewell, from the cliff
Sprang to the presence of her wedded lord !

WHEN a keen thought starts from a
seething brain
In the heart of a city vast and vain,
Whitherward may the wonder fly,
But it shall grow and multiply?
Like the wingèd seed of a meadow-flower
Blown afield in a summer hour.

NOT sublimest aspirations
Make high destinies for nations
Only labour, long continued,
Of the hard-brain'd, heavy-sinew'd !

LINES ON A JAPANESE FAN.

THE old earth sleeps and heaven weeps—
 Heaven is nearer men by night !
 When pale and still
 On flood and hill
 The moon is raining light,
And the blinking crown of stars looks down—
 Silent, vast, and bright,
 As from the beginning of years—
On the poet who sits at the window-sill
 Playing with a painted fan :
 While he thinks, he thinks he hears
 The golden din of thy mandolin,
 Fair lady of Japan !
For heaven is not so near to man
 As men to one another
And the thought of one in a far-off land
 Is the thought of a twin brother.

THE FALSE DREAM.

DOWN sailed a Dream, at dead of night
As I lay unaware :

And lulled me with caresses light

As whisper-winnowed air,

And locked the windows of my sight,

And chained my ears, and charmed my fears

With fables debonair !

Wide roved her plumes with power and grace :

“ And art thou mine ? ” said she,

“ Lie, body, in thy resting-place !

Arouse thee, soul, and see my face !

My fellow-farer be !

Since to the very verge of Space

My wings are thine, thy will is mine :

Arise ! and wend with me ! ”

My soul arose and blent with her,

And left my body sleeping,

With blanchèd brow, mute lips astir,

And wild eyes, wet with weeping.

So fitfully, in sooth, its breath
 Outsighed, that I aver,
In anguish-doubt, "Can this be death?
 And what of coming harm?"
I strove to wrestle with my Dream;
Yet could not breathe, nor move, nor scream;
 For she, with soft, insistent arm,
And ebon locks' long, coiling tress,
Enwound me in forgetfulness.

Lo! light as lifts a flying feather,
Uprose the Dream and I, together!
Into the heavenly dome we soared:
Anon beneath us rough seas roared,
Anon we cleft the silent night,
O'er vale and plain and mountain-height,
Where sleep the Himalayan snows
Through ages of unmarred repose.
Quick as flame we shore the vast,
Cloud nor bird could wing so fast!
As a cry of delight—as a wail of affright—
We came, and we tarried: and passed.

Then to the stellar interspaces
We bent our unastonied faces,

I recked no more than a babe at birth !
We sped so high, we lost the Earth,
'Mid hosts of unfamiliar stars
 Now blazing red, now glowing green,
Or cinder-black, with gaping scars ;
 And some with necklaced moons were seen,
And others like the orb of Mars,
Impearled with continents and seas,
With burning tropics, poles that freeze ;
Yet wheresoe'er our flight could range,
Naught seemèd new, and nothing strange !

“ Whither ? ” I heard the Dream-one cry,
 And she looked at me askance :
 “ Whither wilt now thy quest advance ?
 Put faith in me,—for better or worse,—
 No riddle for thee hath the universe !
Misdoubt me :—in mid-air I die !
For an I have not thy love and thy trust,
I am not so much as a mote of dust ;
As the wafting of a furtive kiss ;
The warning of an adder's hiss ;
Or the wing-beat of an ephemeris ! ”

“ Ha ! ” questioned I, “ who taught thee this ?

Who spake to thee of trust and love ?

Thou that hast neither woe nor bliss,

In hell beneath, or heaven above ;

Who knew no birth on human earth,

Whose past and future the present is ! ”

She frowned on me with a startled stare,

As, blasted by some killing scare,

Might swoon a frail, mad bride :

Then flung me from her frozen side,

And like a flake of drifting snow,

Sidling gently, to and fro,

I sank with my despair below !

Yet far beneath me, faster far

Than headlong dive of plummet lead,

Like the glittering wrack of a shooting star,

The Dream to nether chaos fled !

And when my soul, with glad surprise

Awoke in its body's pained, wet eyes,

It knew not the sacred, secret things

That man from heaven sunder ;

But around us flitted, on tireless wings,

The joys of hope, and the charms of wonder !

DULCIBEL.

WHEN Love, regardless in his pride
Of all the glowing world beside,
Drew bow on Dulcibel,
His generous hand restrained the string,
For fear to hurt so fair a thing,
And short his arrow fell.

But not a chance away to throw,
He made a present of his bow,
With arrows by the armful,
To her ; yet warily forbore
To grant a neverfailing store,
Lest woman wax too harmful.

So, in her season, Dulcibel
Waged open war and ambushed well,
While darts were hers in plenty :
And though my lady's aim was not
So sure as Cupid's, yet she shot
Male victims nine-and-twenty.

The first on whom she tried her bow
By great good luck was I, and so

I live to fight again !

She smote my head, but missed my heart,—
A fortnight healed the trivial smart—

'Tis seven years since then.

NIGHT FEARS.

THE way is lonely, the woods are mirk !
Low rides the lady Moon.

The chequered windows round the kirk

Behind me dwindle, waning dim :

By drowsy gushes from afar

I hear the crazy organ croon,

And through the door that glows ajar

Faintly sob the evening hymn !

—The way is lonely, the woods are mirk !

Is that a mist? is that a mere,

Which like a lake of smoke spreads here?

A marshy mist, meseems ; for list !

—Unhuman, plaintive, drear ;—

The marsh birds mutter, the marsh kine moan,

And all around the plashy ground,

From lampless homesteads, far and near,

By turns the watchdogs howl, not bark.

Am I alone?—I am not alone !

—Who treads behind me, in the dark ?

The summer night, the summer night

Is big with horror, strains with fright !

NYCTALOPÆ.

BLIND go the many through the world.
Worm-battening moles, they delve unseen
Their dark and tortuous ways between
The start and sordid goal of lives unclean ;
And should there be uphurled,
In those chance gropings any grass-tipt sod,
And some emerge to feel the sunny ray,
They own the warmth, and smile,
And call it day.
But the clear light, the gift of God,
They cannot see, and having sunned awhile
Again to that grave-dwelling house descend,
Wherein their birth is, and wherein their end

TRANSLATIONS.

HOR. CARM. I. 9.

(*"Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte."*)

LOOK ! deep in snows, all white and hoar
Soracte looms : the woods, astrain,
Their load no longer can sustain,
And, locked in ice, rills leap no more.

Pile up the hearth ! dispel the cold
With log on log, and, Thaliarch ! tip
The Sabine jar, and ease its lip
Freely, of wine four winters old !

In all things trust the gods' goodwill !
Soon as they strew the winds to sleep,
From warring with the angry deep,
Cypress and ancient ash are still.

Be coy of guessing what will chance
To-morrow ; and account as gain
Each morrow Fate allows ! disdain
No light flirtation, lad ! nor dance,

While youth is quit of sad grey hairs !
Oft, at the hour of given plight,
For tender whisperings by night,
Tryst in the fields, the city squares !

To inner nooks bright laughs pursue,
The hidden damsel that betray ;
Some token from her neck to fray,
Or finger bent on foiling you !

RONDEL OF CHARLES D'ORLEANS
(15TH CENTURY).

(*"Le temps a laissé son manteau."*)

THE season lays aside its gear
Of wind and wet and winter-chill,
And decks itself with broidered frill
Of sunshine gleaming bright and clear !

And not a beast or bird is here
But cries or sings in jargon shrill :
The season lays aside its gear
Of wind and wet and winter-chill !

And now in gay attire appear
The fount, the rivulet and rill ;
For gold and silver drops they 'stil,
And all things wear an altered cheer.
The season lays aside its gear
Of wind and wet and winter-chill !

THE BALLADE WHICH VILLON WROTE, EXPECTING
TO BE HANGED.

YE brother men ! who after us live on,
Let not your hearts too hard against us grow ;
For if you pity us poor wights, anon
To you the rather God will mercy show.
Here you see us hung ; five—six—in a row !
As for the flesh that once we pampered gaily,
It is piecemeal devoured, and rotting daily
And we, the bones, to dust and ashes fall.
At our ill chance, O neither laugh nor rail ye,
But pray to God that he absolve us all !

If we cry on you, brothers, you must not
Mete us disdain ; though justice, for offence,
Put us to death ; since none the less you wot
That not all men have got enough good sense.
Then intercede for us, with prayer intense
Before the sweet Son of the Virgin Mary,
That unto us his grace may never vary,
Which hindereth Hell-fire our souls to thrall.
Dead are we ; us then let no mortal harry,
But pray to God that he absolve us all !

The rain has washed and drenched us from the skies,
The sun has dried us up, and burnt us brown ;
Magpies and crows have hollowed out our eyes,
And rooted forth the hairs of beard and crown.
Never one instant have we sat us down :
Now here, now there, howso the breezes vary,
Swung at their pleasure, we may never tarry ;
Pecked, thick as thimble-dents, by birds withal.
Mortals ! no mocking speeches hither carry,
But pray to God that he absolve us all !

ENVOI.

Prince Jesus ! who o'er all hast signory,
Care Thou that Hell gain not the mastery
Us may no commercing with Hell befall !
Men ! be not ye of our fraternity ;
But pray to God that he absolve us all !

THE ROSE.

SWEET heart ! let us look if the rose,
In the morning so fain to disclose
Her purple attire to the sun,
Has not lost with the waning of day,
The folds of her crimson array,
And her blush, like yours alone !

Ah ! see in how short a space,
Sweet heart ! she has littered the place
With her beauty, alas ! in a shower !
O Nature ! hard stepmother, sure,
If such a fair bloom can endure
But from dawn to the vesper hour.

Then if you will trust in me, sweet !
So long as your life's budding yet,
In its radiance green and new,
Cull the blossom of youth when it blows
For as old age dealt with the rose,
It will wither your beauty too !

(RONSARD.)

BARCAROLLE.

O MAIDEN fair and young,
Say where would you be going ?
The sail aloft is hung ;
The breeze will soon be blowing !

My flag's of silken gores,
Of ivory my oars,
My rudder purest gold ;
An angel's wing my sail,
My crew's a cherub hale,
And an orange crams my hold !

O maiden fair and young,
Say where would you be going ?
The sail aloft is hung ;
The breeze will soon be blowing !

Let's roam Pacific waves,
Or where the Baltic raves,^d
Or far as Java's isle ;
Or else to Norway go,
To pluck the flower of snow,
And time and care beguile !

O maiden fair and young,
Say where would you be going ?
The sail aloft is hung ;
The breeze will soon be blowing.

"Oh bring me," she replied,
"To that true river's side,
Where love dwells evermore !"
—Alas ! my darling maid,
In Loveland, I'm afraid,
We never knew that shore !

(TH. GAUTIER.)

A DECEMBER NIGHT.

BEFORE my schoolboy days took flight,
I sat up reading, late one night,

The classroom's loneliness my plea :

To sit with me, behind my back

A poor child stole up, dressed in black ;—

No brother could be more like me.

His countenance was grave and fair ;

And by the candle's feeble glare

He came to read my open book,

And leant his forehead on my palm ;

Remaining till the morrow, calm

And pensive ; yet with smiling look.

My fifteenth year but just complete,

I trod one day with loitering feet,

Within a wood, a grassy lea :

A stripling came, all clothed in black,

And sat him down beside my track ;—

No brother could be more like me.

I prayed him tell which path were mine
He bore a bunch of eglantine ;
On the other arm his lute lay still.
Save greeting kind, he nought replied,
But mutely, turning half aside,
With finger pointed up the hill.

What time I put my trust in love,
As closely to my room I clove,
Bewailing some first misery,
There came to sit before my fire
A stranger clothed in black attire ;—
No brother could be more like me.

His mien was dark, with troublous eyes ;
One hand he pointed at the skies,
The other flashed a dagger's gleam :
He seemed to suffer all my grief ;
Yet, snatching but a sigh's relief,
He vanished like an empty dream.

Then came the age when youth is wild.
To drink a harlot's health beguiled,
One night I raised my cup, to see

A boon-companion take his place,
In garb of black, before my face ;—
No brother could be more like me.

He wore beneath his mantle new
Some tattered rags of purple hue ;
His forehead budless myrtle crowned ;
His wasted arm was held to mine,
And, touching his, my cup of wine
This quaking hand let slip to ground.

Another year, as daylight fled,
I knelt before a dying bed ;
My father's—there again was he !
Beside the deathbed of my sire
An orphan crouched, in black attire ;—
No brother could be more like me.

His eyes were drowned in tears, like those
Of angels weeping human woes ;
His brows were decked with wreathèd thorn ;
Upon the earth his lute was laid,
Blood-hues his purple vest betrayed,
A dagger cleft his bosom lorn.

So well do I recall him yet,
His face I never shall forget
A moment, all my life's career.
A vision very strange, I wis ;
But whether fiend or angel 'tis,
The friendly shade seems everywhere.

When, later, overtaxed with pain,
To end it, or be born again,
I doomed myself exile from France ;
And when, impatient to be gone,
I hurried forth, to seek alone
Some vestiges of Hope, perchance ;

At Pisa, 'neath the Apennine ;
Cologne, upon the banks of Rhine ;
At Nice, along the valley-side ;
At Florence, in her palace halls ;
At Briguës, 'twixt the cottage walls,
Upon the drear Alp's bosom wide ;

In Genoa's citron-shaded ease ;
At Vevey, neath the apple-trees ;
At Havre, by the Atlantic wave ;

At Venice, on the foul Lido,
Where Adria's pallid billows flow,
To swoon upon a grassy grave ;

Wherever, 'neath the vasty skies,
I have tired my heart and eyes,
Bleeding from a cureless wound ;
Wherever lame Ennui, in league
With sullen, spiritless Fatigue,
Has drawn me on a harrow, bound ;

Wherever, raging ceaselessly
With thirst of worlds unknown to me,
The spectre of my dreams I chase ;
Wherever, though I have not been,
I see again,—too often seen !—
Through clouds of lies—the human face ;

Wherever, too, along my road,
My brow upon my hands I load,
And like a woman, sob despair ;
Wherever, like a lamb forlorn,
That strews his fleece upon the thorn,
I feel my very soul grow bare ;

Wherever I would sleeping lie ;
Wherever I have longed to die ;
Ay, wheresoe'er on earth I flee ;
 There comes to sit beside my track
 A wretch attired in garb of black ;
No brother could be more like me !

(A. DE MUSSET.)

TO-MORROW.

NONE the future can control ;
The future God alone can tell.
Sire ! each time the hour doth toll,
All creation cries farewell !
Futurity,—’tis mystery !
All the things on earth that be,—
—Fame, and fortune soldierly :
Crowns that dazzle subject eyes :
Victory, with singèd wings :
Pride of glory-sated kings :—
Are only as the bird that springs
Lightly on the roof, and flies !

No, none ; though masterful, no man, by mirth or
tears,
Can force thy lips to speak, or, till the hour appears,
Thy chilly grip forestall ;
O spectre mute ! O shadow ! O dread host !
O stealthy-following, ever-maskèd ghost,
Whom men “ To-Morrow ” call !

O ! To-Morrow laughs at laws !
Ask you what to-morrow sends ?
Man to-day will sow the cause,
To-morrow God matures his ends.
To-morrow !—lightning dulled in cloud,
Fog that dims the starry crowd,
And traitor yet but half-avowed !—
'Tis the ram that breaks the wall ;
'Tis a path-forsaking sun ;
'Tis Paris aping Babylon !
To-morrow is the frame of the throne,
To-day is the velvet pall !

To-morrow—'tis the charger that falters, foamy white ;
To-morrow, conqueror !—'tis Moscow fired by night,
As a torch lit in the gloom !
To-morrow your Old Guard strew, dead, for mile
on mile,
The plain of Waterloo ;—then lone St. Helen's isle !
And then, and then—the tomb !

Great citadels to you unbar
At summons of your charger's heel ;
You cut the knot of civil war,
By the keen edge of the steel ;

You, my chief ! alone can chain
The haughty Thames, in her disdain,
And fickle Victory make fain
To own your clarion hers !
You can pass where keys are lost,
Put to shame the proudest boast,
And set for star before a host
The rowel of your spurs !

God keeps Eternity, but still he leaves you Space ;
Yours is on earth the grandest, highest place
Man ever had that under heaven trod !
Sire ! you can take at will, and at a bound,
Europe from Charlemagne and Asia from Mahound !
—But not the Morrow from the eternal God !
(VICTOR HUGO.)

THE STRANGER MAIDEN.

DEEP in a vale of shepherds poor,
With all the bright new years,
When the first larks begin to sing,
A strange fair maid appears.

She was not born within that vale,
Whence cometh she, who knows ?
Too swift her footmarks vanish
When that strange maiden goes !

Her presence, with all blessings rife,
Unlocks a poor man's heart ;
But full of gentle dignity
She treads a course apart.

She comes with fruit and flowers
That grow in other climes,
Where suns that have no setting, gleam
On other worlds and times.

To some she gives her blossoms,
And to some her fruit she gives ;
Forgetting neither man nor child,
Nor wretch that hardly lives.

Glad welcome get all comers ;
But she loves a happy pair,
And gives them of her flowers,
The fairest of the fair !

(SCHILLER.)

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